

you. You know everything already. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The exchange portion of this item could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

**Statement on the Death of Pat Nixon**  
*June 22, 1993*

The Nation is deeply saddened today by the loss of former First Lady Pat Nixon.

Patricia Ryan Nixon was a quiet pioneer whose concern for family and country will leave a lasting mark on history. Mrs. Nixon personified a deep reverence for the cherished American traditions of community service, voluntarism, and personal responsibility to one another.

As First Lady, she was indeed a lady of "firsts." She was the first First Lady to represent the President of the United States on an official overseas visit. She was the first incumbent First Lady to publicly support the equal rights amendment. And she was an early advocate of promoting a woman to the U.S. Supreme Court.

While always dignified and gracious, Mrs. Nixon was also a passionate believer in volunteer service and the importance of Americans helping one another. The appearance of the White House today and its accessibility to visitors at special times each year owe themselves in large degree to her generous and creative efforts. During her first Thanksgiving as First Lady she invited 225 senior citizens from area nursing homes to the White House for a special meal. She invited hundreds of families to nondenominational Sunday services in the East Room. And she offered the White House as a meeting place for volunteer organizations dedicated to solving community problems.

Mrs. Nixon, a mother of two, was also a loyal and steadfast believer in family. She traveled extensively with her husband across the Nation and abroad and was widely praised for her diplomatic gestures overseas. As she said in 1971, "We've always been a team." We are heartened that former President Nixon and Mrs. Nixon were able to celebrate their 53d wedding anniversary yesterday. Our thoughts are with Mrs. Nixon's fam-

ily today as we remember her many accomplishments and contributions to the Nation.

**Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's Task Force on National Health Care Reform**

*June 22, 1993*

The United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled today that the President's Task Force on Health Care Reform, chaired by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, was not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Court of Appeals decision confirms that the task force operated in full compliance with the law.

In reversing the United States district court on this issue, the court of appeals held that Mrs. Clinton is a "full-time officer or employee of the Government" for purposes of the advisory committee act. The court of appeals decision means that the advisory committee act's requirements for open meetings and production of documents did not apply to the task force.

The President announced the creation of the health care task force, as well as interdepartmental working groups, on January 25, 1993. The task force held over 20 meetings in April and May and has presented health care reform proposals and options to the President. The President is now in the process of reviewing those proposals and options and will be preparing a final proposal for delivery to Congress.

The task force terminated on May 30, 1993. There are no plans to reconvene the task force.

**White House Statement on the Posthumous Award of the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Arthur Ashe**

*June 22, 1993*

The President awarded a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian honor, to tennis great Arthur Ashe at the National Sports Awards ceremony at Constitution Hall Sunday night.

Presenting the medal to Ashe's widow, Jeanne, the President noted that Ashe "battled his way to the top rung of international tennis, and he did it with an inner strength and outward dignity that marked his game every bit as much as that dazzling crosscourt backhand."

### **Appointment of Cochairs of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports**

*June 22, 1993*

The President has appointed Olympic gold medalist Florence Griffith Joyner and former NBA star and Congressman Tom McMillen to be the Cochairs of the President's Council on Physical Fitness.

"It is very gratifying that two such distinguished individuals as Florence Griffith Joyner and Tom McMillen have agreed to join my team as Cochairs of the President's Council on Physical Fitness," said the President. "They are heroes to millions of Americans and deservedly so. I look forward to the advice that they will provide Secretary Shalala and myself on how we can enhance opportunities for all of our people to participate in physical fitness and sports activities."

NOTE: Biographies of the appointees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

### **Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders**

*June 23, 1993*

#### **Economic Proposal**

**Q.** Mr. President, is there any way the Republicans can put a plan together that meets your criteria without taxes?

**The President.** Well, I don't see how. You know, we've already cut \$250 billion in spending. We've cut Medicare, Medicaid, veterans, farmers, defense, foreign aid, every part of the Federal Government. The Republican leader said a couple of days ago he was willing to raise taxes on the wealthy, but apparently the people in his caucus who want

to protect high income people and the tax cuts they got in the eighties, while the middle class got a tax increase, are going to win once again. So what he'll have to do is come up with some version of the same plan they have in the House. The Republican plan in the House, I will remind you, lost more Republican votes than the Democratic plan lost Democratic votes. And the reason is it was unfair to the middle class, the working people, the elderly, and to others because it protected upper income people. And I think you're going to see the same thing. We'll see what they have to say, but I can't imagine what else they can do.

We've got a 5-year freeze on domestic discretionary spending. We're cutting defense all we should, in my opinion, and then some. The only thing that's going up in this budget is health care next year. The only thing that's going up is health care. So it's going to be very interesting to see when they have to face the music what they'll say. But we're all eagerly waiting.

**Q.** When do you think you can get this reconciliation through a conference committee, assuming the Senate passes it?

**The President.** Well, one step at a time. We have to get it through the Senate first. We have to get the Senate Finance Committee bill on the floor, watch the amendments come forward, see what happens, and try to pass a bill in the Senate to go on to Congress. And then once we do that, we'll talk about the conference committee.

**Q.** Leon Panetta said yesterday that one of the goals was going to be to restore veterans. How are you going to do that, go more toward the House plan of raising taxes or the Senate plan, which is more cutting entitlements?

**The President.** We're going to do a good job of that. Just watch.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.